

Catherine de Medici.

Our author points out that in Catherine's many portraits her development may be traced from the day when she was a plump little girl of twelve, with rather heavy cheeks and prominent eyes and thick coils of hair. The bride of fifteen, the young woman of twenty to twenty-five, grows steadily maturer in expression and improves in outlines. We are told, however,

It is pronounced unlucky for Catherine that she happened to have a taste for astrology, and to have established an Italian astrologer in a tower near her room. Nothing was more natural, however. Like all her contemporaries, she had a profound belief in the influence of stars upon human lives. In her day astrologers were consulted in as commonplace a way as doctors are now; but such consultations were bound to take place in private, and love potions and magic medicaments were their normal accessories. These mysteries have surrounded her with a legend-

It is, in truth, impossible not to admire the dignity with which she bore this trial. "She never reproached me with my wrongs," said she humbly, "but with wisdom and thankfulness devotion. Perhaps the primitive women in her came out most clearly in this—that she kept her love for the one being who spurned her. Henri even showed fear in her, and this caused a certain shyness, which made her awkward in his presence and prevented her from expressing the naturally tender feeling. But her sentiment influenced her life in ways that have hardly been recognized. It kept her from rebelling against his wishes, even when for her they meant indignity; and had it not been for this attachment, she would not have waited for his death outside. Did she not know that I would not sell her a widow that she told her trouble to the one companion she had in the world, the only

Catherine the Great of Russia.

For upward of a hundred years French writers, recalling, doubtless, the sympathetic attitude of Voltaire, the Emperor and his Empress to the Russian monarch, have been hostile toward the "Despot of the North." Even those themselves keenly interested in Catherine II. of Russia, such as named the Great. As lately as nine years ago, M. C. de Larivière devoted a volume to Catherine, and claimed her with Frederick the Great of Prussia, Maria Theresa and Voltaire among the real masters of the eighteenth century. In England, on the other hand, this extraordinary personage has been much neglected. An attempt to reappraise her life and work, and to show the results of her life as concerned, is now made in a book entitled "*The Courtship of Catherine the Great*," by PHILIP W. SERGEANT, late scholar of Trinity College, Oxford (F. P. Lippincott Company). The author assures

In Mr. Sergeant's perhaps too charitable opinion, a fair deduction from the evidence is that Catherine did not intend to give her consent to Peter's removal. That, at least, she had no intention of doing so until she had accepted the situation, and did not institute too minute an inquiry, which, though it would clear her of all suspicion, might necessitate the punishment of one or more whom she could not afford to punish. She published a version of her husband's name which could not be disproved (and cannot now be demonstrated false), and a decent show of a grief which she could not be expected to feel, and for the rest, imposed silence, so far as such an imposition was practicable, on discussion. Thereby, of course, she gave the scandal-mongers no handle, but preserved her throne. Our author thinks that, if we cannot consider Voltaire's verdict sufficient or seemingly so, "I know that she is reproached with some trifles about her husband, but these are family affairs with which I do not meddle"—full weight should be allowed to all arguments drawn from her precarious position. "Her strategy was the only strategy which could insure her victory in a situation of immense difficulty and danger."

II.

There are those who, in view of her multitudinous love affairs, have suggested

suffered for Catherine's errors; that Russia did not suffer more was due to the fact that at least one of her liege-Potemkin himself governed the empire during the latter part of her reign—was to some extent what Catherine tried to imagine him to be. Catherine herself had cause to regret that her sense of masculine beauty, which led her mind so astray, was not more under her control. She was not one to neglect postscript's verdict; on the contrary, it was his verdict that she acted in. In the end, she wrote, "Concerning this point, our author says: 'One might almost think that Catherine trusted in the justice of posterity to weigh her merits against her weaknesses and to decide that the former outbalanced the latter. This is what posterity has done, or at least such portion of posterity as is competent to a judgment which is worth being taken to.'"

As to Catherine's number of descriptions by a considerable number of persons by

From the San Francisco Chronicle.

"If there is one thing of which I have absolutely no knowledge, it is hunting and fishing," remarked John S. Engle, a well-known sportsman, a bird, a hunter, and I suppose I never will. I couldn't tell you the difference between a striped bass and a mallard duck, unless it came in on a platter. I have been hunting and fishing for you never saw such a keen sportsman in your life. He has a big roomful of guns and fishing tackle and all kinds of sporting paraphernalia. He used to worry the life out of me with his fishing. Finally I agreed to go duck hunting with him. He provided all the regalia. Among other things, he ordered a lot of shells from a downtown gun store, and I was to carry them in my grip. I got the package from the gun store and we went to Alviso. We were proceeding up a slough in a small boat in the cool of the morning when we ran into a million ducks.

"Open up that package of shells," yelled my friend.

I opened the package. It contained twenty-five pounds of assorted fish hooks.